

The pending NPRM to eliminate the REQUIREMENT for a Morse Code test element to qualify for an Amateur Radio License would take one more step in diluting a strong tradition of excellence in on-air skills in Amateur Radio operations. Any one who has participated in a severe emergency knows the value of CW (Morse) telegraphy in getting the message through under the most difficult circumstances. In just a very few years, if this rule-making is approved, the number of qualified CW operators will have declined to very low levels, since there will be no influx of new, younger Amateurs (Hams) with the requisite training and knowledge. I know that the FCC is reluctant to revisit "old ground" but in a "Post-9/11" world it would seem both reasonable and prudent to nurture and preserve a corps of radio operators who can operate and provide emergency communications under ANY conditions. The International guidelines under which this action is being taken do mandate the elimination of the Morse Code requirement for licensing, but state it as an option. In the name of maintenance of excellence, in the name of the long tradition of effective Amateur Radio's contributions in disaster and emergency communications, I ask the Commission to reconsider the elimination of the Morse (CW) requirement, to better serve our Country in times of need and to provide reservoirs of skill in emergency and disaster relief communications. "When common-carrier communications are out, it is the uncommon skill and dedication of the trained and ready Amateur Radio Operators who can make the difference." The CW Operator is the margin for success in difficult situations. The move to eliminate this margin is most ill-advised and needs re-examination and corrective action by the Commission, in my opinion, (which opinion extends over 50 years).